

## Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00  
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 LAB-04  
SIL-01 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 L-03 /046 W  
-----076616 180455Z /15

R 180330Z AUG 77  
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4042  
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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E. O. 11652: NA  
TAGS: EAIR, ELAB, AF, PINT  
SUBJECT: TRUCE CALLED IN ARIANA AFGHAN AIRLINES STRIKE

REF: KABUL 5621

1. SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO THE INFORMATION WE HAVE GLEANED FROM SOME PARTICIPANTS IN THE RECENT ARIANA AIRLINES EMPLOYEES' STRIKE (REFTEL), THE ARIANA BOARD OF DIRECTORS -- MOTIVATED BY PRESIDENT DAOUD' INSTRUCTION TO GET THE PLANES FLYING AGAIN -- EITHER ACCEDDED TO, OR PROMISED FURTHER STUDY OF, EACH DEMAND ON THE PART OF THE EMPLOYEES. END SUMMARY.

2. SOME OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE TEMPORARY SETTLEMENT WERE: THOSE FLIGHT EMPLOYEES INVOLVED IN THE CUSTOMS DUST-UP WHICH SPARKED THE WHOLE AFFAIR -- A FIRED CABIN ATTENDANT, AND A PILOT WHO HAD BEEN SUSPENDED AND FINED -- HAVE BEEN REINSTATED WITHOUT PENALTY AND ARE NOW FLYING AGAIN; THE SERVICE MANAGER IN KABUL, WHO IS FEMALE AND WHOSE HIGH-HANDED DEMEANOR APPARENTLY WAS A LONG-TIME IRRITANT TO THE FLIGHT CREWS, HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED TO OTHER DUTIES; AND THE ARIANA BOARD AGREED THAT THE PILOTS SHOULD NOT BE REQUIRED TO FLY MORE THAN NINE HOURS PER DAY.

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3. THE LONGER-TERM ISSUES, SUCH AS PROVISION OF COMPANY HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE, HIGHER PAY, AND THE PROVISION OF A STATION REPRESENTATIVE AT TASHKENT TO ASSIST ARIANA CREWS, REPORTEDLY WILL BE STUDIED AND INCORPORATED INTO A NEW GENERAL PLAN WHICH WILL BE ADOPTED -- AT AN UNSPECIFIED DATE IN THE NEAR FUTURE -- BY THE ARIANA BOARD OF DIRECTORS. THE ARIANA EMPLOYEES REPORTEDLY

HAVE STATED THAT THEY EXPECT THE BOARD TO COMMENCE CONSIDERATION OF THESE REMAINING ISSUES WITHIN TEN DAYS -- OR THEY WILL "FLY OUT OF THE COUNTRY AND INFORM THE WORLD PRESS ABOUT THEIR GRIEVANCES."

4. REGARDING THE ATMOSPHERICS SURROUNDING THE STRIKE, ONE SOURCE SAID THAT THE ISSUE WENT ALL THE WAY TO PRESIDENT DAOUD, WHO APPARENTLY MADE IT CLEAR TO THE BOARD THAT THEY WERE TO "FIND A SOLUTION -- FAST." FURTHER, EVEN THOUGH THE EMPLOYEES CLAIMED THEY WERE PREPARED TO GO TO JAIL IF NECESSARY TO SUPPORT THEIR DEMANDS, MANAGEMENT REPORTEDLY DID NOT EMPLOY THREATS ALONG THESE LINES, AND THE NEGOTIATIONS THEMSELVES HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED TO US AS RELATIVELY CALM AND BUSINESSLIKE.

5. THE EMPLOYEES RESISTED ALL ATTEMPTS ON THE PART OF MANAGEMENT TO IDENTIFY ANY LEADERS OF THE STRIKING GROUP, AND THE EMPLOYEES PROFESS TO BE CONFIDENT THAT NO RETRIBUTION WILL BE EXACTED BY THE AUTHORITIES.

6. ONE ARIANA SOURCE SAID THAT THE ESTIMATED REVENUE LOSS AS A RESULT OF THE APPROXIMATELY 48-HOUR WORK STOPPAGE WAS ABOUT \$150,000

7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THIS PARTICULAR INCIDENT, WHICH HAD MANY OF THE ELEMENTS OF A MODERN LABOR UNION ACTION, IS UNIQUE IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN (WHICH HAS EXPERIENCED A FEW WORKER DISPUTES AT SOME TEXTILE FACTORIES IN THE PAST -- BUT NO ORGANIZED STRIKE) WE WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO CONCLUDE THAT IT WILL PROVOKE ANY OUTBREAK OF SIMILAR JOB ACTIONS ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY, NOR TO ATTRIBUTE INORDINATE SIGNIFICANCE TO ITS LONG-RANGE IMPACT. THE EMPLOYEES INVOLVED IN THIS CASE CONSTITUTED A VERY SMALL (BETWEEN 50 AND 60 INDIVIDUALS) GROUP OF HIGHLY TRAINED PEOPLE WHO WERE, IN EFFECT, IRREPLACEABLE, AND WHO WERE, THEREFORE, IN A VERY STRONG BARGAINING POSITION (FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE AT LEAST) WITH CONSIDERABLE LEVERAGE OVER THEIR AIRLINE BOSSES AND THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT OTHER DISSATISFIED GROUPS OF WORKERS MIGHT NOT TRY THEIR HAND AT SUCH A MANEUVER IN THE FUTURE. ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED MEDIA HAS BEEN SILENT SO FAR ON THE INCIDENT, THE KABUL COCKTAIL CIRCUIT IS ALIVE WITH SPECULATION THAT SOME LABOR RELATIONS PRECEDENTS MAY HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED. HOWEVER, WE WOULD BE HARDPRESSED TO IDENTIFY OTHER POSSIBLE GROUPS WHO MIGHT POSSESS EVEN THE REMOTEST CHANCE OF WRINGING

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INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 LAB-04

SIL-01 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 L-03 /046 W

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R 180330Z AUG 77

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SIMILAR CONCESSIONS FROM THE REGIME. FURTHERMORE, IT WOULD SEEM SAFE TO SAY THAT THE DAOUD GOVERNMENT IS NOT USED TO BEING PRESSURED IN THIS WAY BY DOMESTIC GROUPS, AND IT PROBABLY DOES NOT LIKE VERY MUCH HAVING TO BEND IN ORDER TO SATISFY ANY DEMANDS. MOREOVER, DESPITE THE CONFIDENT SOUND BEING EMITTED BY THE SUCCESSFUL ARIANA STRIKERS, IT IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE THAT, IN TIME, SOME SORT OF RETALIATION MIGHT BE UNDERTAKEN IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE THAT SUCH TACTICS MAY NOT BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE REGIME'S CONCEPT OF PROPER BEHAVIOR.

8. AS TO WHERE THE IMMEDIATE BLAME FOR THIS BROUHAHA MIGHT LAND, ARIANA PRESIDENT AMANULLAH NAJEED MIGHT FIND HIMSELF ON FAIRLY THIN ICE. SEVERAL ARIANA EMPLOYEES HAVE TOLD US THAT HE WAS DEEPLY DISLIKED BY THE MAJORITY OF THE AIRLINES' STAFF, AND A SENIOR AFGHAN OFFICIAL HAS CHARACTERIZED NAJEED TO US AS "A FOOL." IN OTHER CONVERSTATIONS WITH US, PAN AM REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM WALLACE HAS PRAISED THE ACTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE ARIANA BOARD DURING THE STRIKE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT HIS POSITIVE REMARKS POINTEDLY DID NOT INCLUDE NAJEED. END COMMENT. ELIOT

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## Message Attributes

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